

President, Board of Directors:  
Jack Malone



Chief Executive Officer:  
David Burnett

**Governor's Proposed Budget FY18-FY19  
Appropriations Hearing  
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
Thursday, February 23rd, 2017**

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron and Members of the Committee, thank you for accepting my testimony today on the important investments through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to support efforts to end homelessness in CT.

**Connecticut is making progress to end homelessness – saving lives and saving public dollars. Preserving state investments will allow us to maintain progress.**

- We recognize that Connecticut is in a place where tough choices have to be made to our state budget.
- Governor Malloy and our legislative leaders have long understood and supported the importance of ending homelessness in our state in both fiscal and human terms.
- We know what works to end chronic homelessness: permanent supportive housing, which combines housing subsidy with case management services. Permanent supportive housing is highly effective at ending once and for all the homelessness of those who need this assistance. And it is proven to save communities up to 70% of the costs they will otherwise incur when chronic homelessness persists.
  - Supportive services for those who enter permanent supportive housing are provided under the Department of Mental Health and Addiction

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Services. These services are a critical component of keeping these high-need individuals housed and stable. **These services are funded from the Housing Supports and Services Line, at \$23.2 million in FY 18 and FY 19.**

We ask that you maintain the critical support services for permanent supportive housing.

- Investments are working: numbers of those experiencing homelessness are going down year after year.
- Cuts to these services would risk reversing the substantial progress we have made to end chronic homelessness. Cuts to these critically important services could mean increases in unsheltered, high-need homelessness – taking us the wrong direction, and imposing new costs on our communities.
- Connecticut was the first state in the nation recognized by the federal government for ending chronic homelessness among Veterans; and one of only three states to end all homelessness among veterans.
- The HUD 2015 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report showed a drop of nearly 50 % in chronic homelessness between 2014 and 2015 Connecticut- the largest reduction in any state. In December 2016, CT matched all chronically homeless individuals to a housing resource.
- Every year, we are seeing declining numbers of people experiencing homelessness – evidence of the progress we are making. The 2016 Point-in-Time (PIT) showed the lowest number of people experiencing homelessness in CT, a fourth year of decline and a 13% decrease since the first count in 2007.
- Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, and an expensive public policy problem. Investments in frontline homeless services, permanent supportive housing, and support services save public resources and help families and individuals transition to housing, stability, and hope.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and thank you for your support to efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Sincerely,



Michael Van Vlaenderen  
Continuum of Care Service Director  
Reliance Health, Inc.